



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 16, 2017, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Allison Curran, Lainey Rappaport, Emma Swift, Donna Waldron

Staff Present: Annie D’Alton, Cemetery Office Assistant

Public Present: Dave Hartnett, City Councilor-North District

Attachments: Attendance list, FY17 Revenue Reports (Monthly Totals, Cumulative Totals, New World report)

Mtg. was started at 4:37 by Chair Donna Waldron.

I. Approval of Agenda

A. Lainey Rappaport moved to approve the Agenda; Alison Curran seconded; all approved.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2017 Meeting

A. Rita Church requested that Annie D’Alton send a copy of the new rule about use of the City’s Cemeteries for non-City-sponsored events to the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery and Queen City Ghostwalk. Emma Swift moved to approve minutes with this addition; Rappaport seconded; all approved.

III. Old Business

A. Storm water easement

1. No map or other information has been forwarded to the Cemetery Office or Commission. The Commissioners expressed a hope that Deryk Roach would supply any updates about this proposed project when it becomes available.

IV. New Business

A. Chapel Handicap Access

1. During the Memorial Weekend Open House, a man using a wheelchair had to get out of his chair and struggle up the steps to enter the Chapel.
2. Church suggested obtaining a portable ramp, to install when needed. David Hartnett suggested finding out if Parks has one that could be borrowed.
3. Because the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Commission believes a permanent ramp is not required.
4. When a ramp is available, Waldron suggested adding “handicap accessible” to event and rental advertising could attract more people.
5. Curran suggested asking other organizations with similar needs what their solutions are. Hartnett suggested contacting AARP.
6. Waldron wants the Parks Director to address this need.
7. Church will report this discussion to the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery.



V. Superintendent's Items

- A. Jesse Bridges resigned from his position as Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Director. No Parks representative was present, and no Agenda items were submitted by interim Director Nina Safavi.

VI. Public Comment (*This agenda item was added to give Councilor Hartnett an opportunity to speak.*)

- A. Hartnett suggests that a member of each of the City's Commissions reports to the City Council once a year, to make the Council aware of the Commission's service, activity and value. This is required for larger Commissions, but not the Cemetery Commission. It is a good way to communicate needs to the Mayor and the Councilors, who serve on committees that make decisions affecting City Departments. He does not believe a Cemetery Commissioner has ever done this. It should be a 15-minute presentation. Contact City Council President Jane Knodell to get on the agenda.
1. The Commissioners welcomed this suggestion.
- B. Hartnett asked which Cemetery Commissioners are up for re-appointment in the near future. He and Councilor Kurt Wright (Ward 4) serve on the Commission Appointment Committee. They have chosen "Tag" Taginski to fill Donna Waldron's position. There were 2 or 3 applicants. Recommendation from John & Jane Ewing had a significant impact on their decision. The Commissioners and the public are welcome to communicate their preferences for future applicants, and this is very helpful to the appointment committee members as they make their decisions.
1. The Commissioners welcomed this suggestion, asking if they can request to view the applications, and what the age minimum is: Hartnett replied, yes, and 18 years, but a non-voting "student" position can be created.
- C. Concerning appointment of the new Director of Parks: Hartnett will invite the Commissioners to the final interview, where they would have an opportunity to advocate for the Cemetery Division's needs, including stressing the value of making the Office Assistant position full-time.
- D. Hartnett asked if the Commission is concerned about impact on Lakeview from public access via the new west fence gate off the bike path, and the south fence gate, especially once the new Park and Cambrian Rise development on the south side of Lakeview is completed.
1. D'Alton noted that access via these gates is not advertised, but allowed.
 2. Church expressed concern, especially about the new gate: during the City Marathon, she witnessed a person enter that gate with a dog. She told them dogs were not allowed in the City's cemeteries, and he said there was no sign, and he's from out of town, so he didn't know. Swift noted this gate is a priority location for a "No dogs allowed" sign.
 3. Rappaport noted that Shedd told her dogs have been an increasing problem, especially in Spring when the poop left by owners who don't pick it up becomes evident, and a problem for staff performing grounds maintenance, such as mowing. "No dogs allowed" signs are needed at each access point of Greenmount.
- E. Hartnett asked D'Alton to describe the chain of command in the Cemetery Division: Jeff Shedd and Steve Bachand are the 2 full-time employees, maintaining grounds and equipment, and doing some Office Assistant duties when the Office Assistant is not scheduled to work; Shedd supervises Bachand, D'Alton, and the 2 full-time seasonal employees hired each summer.



- F. Hartnett asked if there is a problem with vandalism in the City-owned cemeteries.
 - 1. D'Alton replied: in Greenmount some graffiti a few years ago, & fence cut repeatedly until we recognized that through foot and bike traffic from Schmanska Park could not be eliminated, so a gate was installed; not known if tipped monuments in all 3 cemeteries are from frost heaves or being pushed.
 - 2. Rappaport described ongoing issues at Greenmount (including needles, campers, dogs).
 - 3. Curran responded that she is concerned about increased access from the south gate after Cambrian Rise opens.

- G. Hartnett noted that not too many people are aware of the City's cemeteries and the issues involved in maintaining them. The Commission could be instrumental in educating both the public and the City Council, and advocating for Cemetery needs. He indicated that the City Council strongly supports retaining the Cemetery Commission but it would be beneficial to strengthen the Commission's position in the eyes of the City Council. Commission could report to the Neighborhood Planning Assembly 3-4 times per year, too, especially just prior to events. This would connect the cemeteries with people in their neighborhoods, and could connect interested volunteers with the cemeteries, as well.

VII. Commissioner's Items

- A. Recap of training at Barber Cemetery, Charlotte, VT
 - 1. Waldron described monument repair project for Hartnett.
- B. Evaluation of work at Greenmount Cemetery on June 10
 - 1. About 30 stones were repaired. D'Alton asked if a list was made; Waldron said no, but they will create one. Comcast volunteers did not show up, but Dianne Leary from Vermont Old Cemetery Association, Peter Dimick (the stone mason who provided training at Barber Cemetery) and local monument repair person Jim Woodman were all there, and were very helpful. A report on the event will be published on the VOCA website.
- C. Future plans at Greenmount
 - 1. Leary proposed that the Burlington Cemetery Commission, Woodman, Dimick and herself form a team to work at both Barber and Greenmount. Swift asked why the Burlington Commission should work in Charlotte, and Waldron responded: to build a partnership. This would be scheduled in the Fall, after the busy season for the professionals was over.
 - 2. Swift suggested finding additional volunteers, since the Comcast crew didn't come through. Curran agreed, noting that local individuals would probably have more interest than the Comcast crew, anyway. She also felt, having been at the Barber training, that we wouldn't want more than 20 volunteers because there are only 3 professionals to lead volunteers, and a limited amount of equipment.
 - 3. Waldron urged the Commission to follow through with this idea. Church moved that the Commission do so; Rappaport seconded; all in favor. Waldron will email Leary.
- D. Setting goals & timeline for Commission
 - 1. The Commissioners decided to table this until the new Commissioner is present at the next meeting.
- E. Chairperson position
 - 1. Waldron suggested Curran, who indicated that she is starting a new job in the Fall, and doesn't know how much a time commitment this will require. Waldron said she'd been pretty busy with the position—making contacts, following up on items, writing agendas. Swift offered to help. Hartnett indicated there could be 2 co-chairs.



2. Rappaport moved that Curran and Swift be co-chairs; Church seconded; all in favor.
 3. Waldron noted that Branch Out Burlington! wants to continue working with the Cemetery Commission.
 4. Curran expressed an interest in following up on allowing Green Burials at Lakeview. She will contact Michelle Acciavatti about viewing the documentary shown at her presentation at the Fletcher Free Library, attended by Swift.
 5. Swift offered to work on creating a task calendar to help the Commissioners remember deadlines for such things as upcoming term expiration dates.
- F. Hartnett suggested inviting a Parks Foundation representative to a Cemetery Commission meeting, to discuss the possibility of allowing the Cemetery Commission to invest in their fund in order to invest and retain donations until they are needed (otherwise they need to be used by the end of the fiscal year in which they were made). This would allow the Cemetery Commission to raise money for cemetery preservation.
1. Church noted the leak in the Chapel roof, repair of which has been deferred for a long time. She reported that the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery are concerned about insuring the Chapel, and Friend Monica Lafayette reported that the City's insurance protects only the exterior of the building, not the interior, so any repairs to the interior would be the responsibility of the Friends—she asked if this was correct. Hartnett said Bob Rusten, the City's Chief Financial Officer, should know, so the Friends could ask him.
- G. Hartnett reported that there is a proposal to make an interconnecting trail system through Burlington, which would include Greenmount Cemetery. The Commission could invite Sharon Bushor, the City Councilor for Ward 1, where Greenmount is, to discuss this.

VIII. Office Report

- A. D'Alton referred to the Accounts Receivable reports for FY17, which will be completed after June 30.
1. Income has been increasing, and may meet FY16's totals by the end of June.
 2. D'Alton noted that \$31,325 more from lot sales was allocated to the operating budget in FY17 because of the reduction of percentage allocated to the Perpetual Care Fund (from 55% to 5%). Bridges had proposed this change to the Commission with the indication that it would allow more money to be spent on Cemetery repairs. The Commissioners would like to know what repairs were done in FY17 with the \$31,325.
 3. The Perpetual Care Fund investments lost value (\$5,589) over the FY, but generated \$13,611 in interest, which is allowed to be added to the operating budget, if not reinvested.

IX. Adjournment

- A. Next meeting: Thursday, July 13, 2017, 4:30 PM, Lakeview Cemetery Office
- B. At 6:18 pm, Swift moved to adjourn; Rappaport seconded; all in favor.